

Some of the Alhambra diapers are very effective. The general form of the capitals of columns is Byzantine. They are all coloured, generally in green grounds, with blue leaves and ornaments, bands and inscriptions in gold or white, in marble, on a blue ground,—sometimes the reverse.

Much as has been done, there is one great province of natural materials hitherto wholly unexplored, namely, the insect tribe. The student could, perhaps, nowhere see so beautiful a display of brilliant colours as in the glass cases of the entomological collection in the British Museum, where he will see no false combinations of colours, and where every form has all the conditions of symmetry, nearly all being forms of three thicknesses, which is the most important element of a good diaper material. Not that you ought to imitate these insect forms, but use them, as the Saracens have used flowers, merely as the base of the design.

THE PARKS AND PERIPATETICS.

To men of business who cannot quit London and its immediate precincts—and one million, at least, of the population are in this predicament—open and elevated spaces are of incalculable value; the Government of the country is fully alive to this fact, as is attested by those parties, of all shades of politics, who have been in office during the three last reigns—but particularly that of our present gracious sovereign. By them Victoria Park has been bought, enclosed, planted, and embellished; Battersea-fields have also been appropriated, at throwing 300 acres into wilderness as an appropriation, and Primrose-hill has been encircled with a fence and dedicated to public recreation.

These preliminary measures bode well for the people, and discover a forethought for the requirements of this leviathan metropolis which, notwithstanding the emigration from other parts of the kingdom, is increasing in a ratio that makes one tremble for our atmosphere of fog and smoke, so ungenial for at least vegetable life. These open spaces are the sanatoria of the tradesman, the mechanic, and the artisan; they conduce to the health, the enjoyment, and the morality of the people, and are now become so essential to their greatly improved habitude, that every item which relates to the plantation and ornament of those liberties is of paramount importance.

Who that walks an evening's hour within the floral bosquets of St. James's Park and Kensington Gardens, can view the innumerable groups of gratified promenaders, and the knots of noisy sportive children, and not be struck with the sweet influence of these charming and sylvan places of resort (perhaps hardly to be called retreats) on the expanding minds of the rising generation, and their sedative and consoling effects on the more adult. These fair scenes of cultivated nature harmonise and improve the hearts of all who take relaxation there, instead of in the bowling-yard or pothouse, when fatigued by the business or toils of day; they are as consecrated ground, inalienable from the great objects of general good, and to curtail their extent by a single rod, would be a crime against reason and religion.

For the adornment of these spaces great credit is due to the men in office, under whose auspices such improvements have been achieved. And here I may be permitted to indulge a recollection of gratitude and thankfulness to the genius and industry of London, to whom the world is indebted for the perfection of landscape gardening.

Any one who remembers the bleak, house-bound, russet and waste-looking superficies of Hyde-park, fifteen years back, must admit the great amelioration of its appearance, from the plantations which skirt its margins: how softened and tranquil is its look now,—how like an unheeded common then! Surely the promoters of so much general happiness—the planters of an such taste, are entitled to public gratitude, if not to a testimonial as lasting as the stern brazen Achilles. But these are the works of peace: peace, then, to the originators.

Whilst admitting all this, the reflection comes that the hand of gentle improvement is staid, and that the spirit of studying and providing for the quiet enjoyment of those who

are yet to range the new enclosures of Battersea-park, but chiefest of Primrose-hill, is laid or slumbering.

In this latter inclosure (about 160 acres)—one of the most beautiful as to position, and most apt for arborage,—not a tree has been planted, although it has been encircled for now three years with wood,—that is to say, a wooden park-paling!

The land has been bought at a great cost—it has been presented to the public—five or six bare poles have been erected there for the amusement of climbing boys, just chuck up by the public road, as a sort of mock sanatorium,—but not a shrub, nor tree, nor flower—not a twig, as much as would perch a sparrow, has yet been planted; no—three years have been lost!

It might perhaps appear ungracious to allude to the deficit in the Woods and Forests exchequer, or to refer to the unhappy narrowness of crown lands which yield no usufruct, or next to nothing, to the national purse; but this liberality of serving up to the selection of John Bull and his family a coarse treat in quantity, resembles the ill-judged liberality of the host who dished his beef fresh, but without salt: so Primrose-hill is plain enough, but wants the garnish.

This is really pitiful, paltering, but it is not all; and to this subject I have before alluded in *THE BUILDER*. A road (the external park road) divides the hill plot from Regent's park; the latter is closely planted along the margin, and the only open space through which a view is obtained of Primrose-hill is just at the point where the suspension-bridge conducts to the new park across the dell of the canal: here, having crossed the bridge, a detour of about forty yards must be made to the right to get access (to cross the road only) to the inviting hills; whilst, immediately opposite the bridge, in the eye of the vista, intervenes a building plot of ground of only two acres, which is labelled "to be let for building." When built on, a long row of houses will intercept the sight of the rising verdant hills, and repel the wanderer back from a bastion of wall to repose on the green sward within.

Then, indeed, will the beauty of this only rural and hilly landscape within many miles of town be totally disenchanted. Lord Morpeth considered the point, agreed that it was essential to the design (or rather to prevent the two parks from being marred), that for the purposes of opposing entrances from one to the other it was indispensable; but there was no money to buy the two acres, as all had been expended on the 160; verily the management that built a house, and forgot the stairs, was wisdom to this.

So much for the stagnation impending over the new parks. Now, again, a word to the old one: the Regent's (which was planted and complete some twenty years back), with timber grown to wood, happened to contain within its limits five houses, to each of which belonged a private reserve of about seven or eight acres. These mansions were ornamental, and although the public was excluded from these reserves, yet the floral shrubberies gave a private park aspect to each holding.

A few years back, for some reason not palpable to the initiated in official forms, large portions of the park were again fenced off, and added to the private grounds of the favoured residents—and thus an extent of from fifty to sixty acres of this now nearly central park (central to the west-end) was excised from the national liberty, closed against the public, and devoted to the lucky denizens of the inner circle.

We know not whether this alienation of crown lands much swelled the exchequer, or turned the balance of royal domains for even one year to the crown side; but setting aside the royalties on minerals, it is quite clear, that for every acre of crown lands in official management, the state is some shillings the poorer. How would his grace of Sutherland or any great landlord contrive to live if the produce of their acres were in this inverse ratio?

There is but one more fact relating to Regent's Park to be noticed just now, and that is that the whole margin of the canal from St. John's Wood Chapel for a quarter of a mile, has been granted to the use of an individual living outside the park, and opposite that chapel: and he also has had

another portion of about 1½ acre fenced off (within two years) for his use inside the park, at the extremity of the long strip forming the dell opposite Lord Dunsinane's, to which slice of the park a bridge conducts across the canal opposite to the end of Charles-street, Portland-town.

Over this bridge there ought to be an entrance to the park for the accommodation of Portland and Titchfield-terraces (which front full the end dell and strip for upwards of 300 yards), as also for the now dense population of Portland-town; and this entrance is more particularly requisite, as the distance between Hanover and Macclesfield park gates exceeds half a mile!

One might suppose this park had been private and not public property,—it has been so frittered, and the public so unceremoniously excluded.

If it be public or crown land, wherefore has one road been alienated and degraded? or why has an overgrown population been debarred access to the park for three-quarters of a mile!

The inhabitants feeling aggrieved, petitioned the Woods and Forests. Lord Dudley Stuart presented their petition: yet although the popular gales blew a hurricane, the Woods and Forests nodded not—no reply has been obtained.

Sir, if your province be to encourage architecture, every unwise change which tends to depreciate the value of buildings, and they are not ungratefully encircling this beautiful park, must meet, as it merits your reprobation:—every restraint on the liberty of Englishmen to enjoy the little of rural scenery that is of right theirs, and in distance available, must meet your support.

These facts are palpable and indisputable, your advocacy is therefore sought by the public, which acknowledges with some proofs of its approbation your merits, whatever may be the regards due to the desultory remarks of

GEORGE.

THE ARCHITECTURAL PUBLICATION SOCIETY.

THE second part issued by this society for the year 1849 is a very good one. It contains, as the first did, twelve plates, and is accompanied by a "loose sheet" of descriptive matter, judiciously drawn up by Mr. J. W. Papworth. The subjects include further illustrations of the Italian Campsani; an interesting collection of chimney-tops; brick cornices, comparatively little known, and likely to be suggestive; doorway from Loreto; a Gothic facade at Drift; metal work from Florence and Siena; tiled pavements; staircase, San Giorgio, Venice; stained glass, Assisi; and window cornices, of Jacobean period, from Glasgow. The contributors are Messrs. J. Johnson, J. M. Lockyer, H. Parker, Heneker, D. Wyatt, C. Fowler, jun., Goring, T. Davies, Donaldson, Mocatta, and J. Wilson.

It was anticipated that the third part, containing letter-press, would be issued in the course of this month, but depending as this necessarily does on the leisure of men mostly fully occupied, it cannot be hoped for so soon. The subscribers, however, have every reason to be satisfied with what is done, and we would hint to them that the subscription for the next year should be paid forthwith, to enable the council to make the necessary provision.

MAP DECORATIONS FOR THE NEW HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.—At a meeting of the Geographical Society, held on the 25th ult., Capt. Smyth, R.N., in the chair, a proposal for the construction of maps upon the walls of the corridors and committee-rooms of the new houses of Parliament, by Mr. Saxe Bannister, was read, with remarks upon the subject by Mr. G. B. Greenough. Mr. Bannister proposes the construction of maps on a large scale as useful decorations to the new palace at Westminster; such as that constructed by Sebastian Cabot, suspended in the gallery at the palace of Whitehall, and as are in the Gallery of Geography of the Vatican. The idea is capable of very extensive amplification.